**Assnranfce to Tobacco farmers regarding non-reduction in Tabacco cultivation**

7610. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have given any assurance to tobacco growers that it would not curb or reduce tobacco cultivation under pressure;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) how Government propose to encourage tobacco farmers to continue their tobacco cultivation; and

(d) steps proposed to protect the traditional foreign exchange earning crops like tobacco?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b) The to bacco Board fixes the crop size of Virgi nia-tobacco every year in Andhra Pra desh and Karanataka after asstssing its inter-national |domestic demand and supply position.

(c) With a view to help tobacco farmers to enhance quality and yield of tobacco, Tobacco Board implements developmental and extension schemes which include supply of seeds/seedlings of high yielding and disease resistant varieties of FCV/Burley tobacco, training and exposure of farmers to the latest research findings, post and disease control through fumigation of nurseries, subsidising use of sprinkler irrigation system and improving curing and storing facilities.

(d) Some of the steps taken to enhance exports of tobacco and tobacco products include, re-orientation of pro. duction of tobacco to meet the changing international needs, monitoring and control of pesticide residues aligning grading to international standards, permitting imports for product development, sponsoring trade delegations and participation in International Trade Fairs and Exhibitions.

**Strategy to promote traditional indian exports**

7611. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government considers long terms strategy to safeguard, protect and promote traditional exports like sandalwood;

(b) whether Government will consider formation of a Timber Export Board, catering purely to valuable timber resources like Sandalwood and other rare and valuable timbers; and

(c) steps propose in this direction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) Export of Sandalwood in its raw form is prohibited under the existing Export-Import Policy. This is to promote the export of finished handicrafts made out of Sandalwood. To exploit the export potential of Sandalwood products fully the Policy for export of finished handicrafts made out of sandalwood and machine finished Sandalwood products has been liberalised.

(b) No such proposal is presently under consideration of the Government.

(c) Does not arise.

**भारतीय व्यापार मेला प्राधिकरण द्वारा प्रगति मैदान में आयोजित मेले**

7612. श्री शंकर दयाल सिंह : क्या वाणिज्य मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) भारतीय व्यापार मेला प्राधिकरण द्वारा 1993-94 और 1994-95 के वर्षों के दौरान नई दिल्ली स्थित प्रगति मैदान में कितनी प्रदर्शनियों तथा मेलों का आयोजन किया गया ;

(ख) उपर्युक्त अवधि के दौरान व्यापार मेला प्राधिकरण को टिकटों की बिक्री से कितना लाभ हुआ ;